Thank you Mr. President for granting us the floor.

We would like to thank and congratulate you for serving and leading this executive board.

We would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to UNWOMEN staff and leadership for their hard work in arranging and convening this board meeting.

Mr. President,

The year ahead of us is a crucial year.

We will mark the 20-year anniversary of the Beijing Platform, and replace the MDGs with the new post-2015 development agenda.

Women’s rights and gender equality are top priorities on Israel’s International Development agenda.

Israel views women's empowerment as a critical driver of economic development.

MASHAV, Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, has made a point of promoting the empowerment of women from developing countries.

Israel’s 4th Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was the world's fourth woman to hold the highest office in her nation.

In 1961, Prime Minister Meir established The Mount Carmel International Training Center in Haifa, the first training center of its kind.

To this day, with a robust focus on capacity building, through training programs ranging from health to agriculture, from business entrepreneurship to community leadership, the center, together with Mashav, empowers female professionals from developing countries.

Many of the center’s programs were created thanks to the cooperation of international and national organizations, including UN Women.

Alongside training programs, the center holds the biannual International Conference for Women Leaders.
Since 1955, female leaders from around the world, including members of parliaments and cabinets, UN officials, social activists and private sector figures, convene in Israel to discuss gender related topics.

This year, the conference will focus on the creation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, and specifically on promoting gender equality through economic empowerment.

For years, Israel has been collaborating with UNWOMEN and UNDP in organizing the conference.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue this partnership.

Mr. President,

This year, as we mark the 20 year anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, Israel, in coordination with UNWOMEN, is preparing to take an active role in the events.

We are happy to announce that, for the first time, a high level delegation headed by an Israeli minister will participate in the CSW events here at the UN.

Mr. President,

20 years after the Beijing Declaration and 15 years after the adoption of the MDG’s we look back with some satisfaction for all that has been achieved.

But, there is a lot that still needs to be done.

Horrible violence against women is taking place in crisis areas, especially in places where extremist groups such as ISIS and Boko-Haram are terrorizing people.

In other societies, many women are deprived of their economic rights and are therefore less financially secure than men.

The responsibility for alleviating these hardships lies on our shoulders.

As a developing country until less than 20 years ago, we believe that capacity building is crucial for sustainable women empowerment.

We further believe that equipping women with entrepreneurial tools for starting their own businesses will in turn spell real freedom for them, and strengthen their country’s economy.

We believe that empowering women to assume leadership roles in their respective communities and countries can help in defeating extremism and promoting dialogue and peace.
We believe that helping women, who have been discriminated against for generations, to recognize their power to lead a change, should be a main objective of the international community.

Years before establishing The Mount Carmel Center, Golda Meir said:

Pessimism is a luxury that a Jew can never allow himself.

This saying is valid for all of us: indeed, it is a crucial year and the tasks ahead of us are enormously challenging.

But, we cannot allow ourselves even one moment of pessimism.

Together, we shall take responsibility and work on promoting the position of women in their societies.

Israel recognizes this heavy responsibility.

We are thus humbled and excited to take an active role as a member of UNWOMEN executive board.

I thank you Mr. President